



## TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G'OYALAR



### A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK IDIOMS: STRUCTURAL, SEMANTIC AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

**Xolxo'jayeva Rayxona Ikromjon qizi**

[xolhojeyeva96@mail.ru](mailto:xolhojeyeva96@mail.ru)

**ANNOTATION;** *This study presents a comparative structural, semantic, and linguocultural analysis of English and Uzbek idioms. Idioms are examined as fixed phraseological units that reflect both universal cognitive mechanisms and culture-specific symbolic systems. The research aims to identify structural patterns, degrees of semantic equivalence, and underlying conceptual metaphors in the two languages. The study employs a qualitative comparative methodology based on phraseological theory developed by Viktor Vinogradov and Charles Bally, as well as conceptual metaphor theory proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. The corpus consists of 100 idioms (50 English and 50 Uzbek) selected according to frequency, structural stability, figurative meaning, and cultural significance. The analysis includes structural classification, semantic equivalence categorization (full, partial, functional, and culture-specific), and conceptual-metaphorical interpretation. The findings reveal that English idioms predominantly occur in fixed verb phrase constructions, whereas Uzbek idioms demonstrate greater morphological flexibility due to their agglutinative structure. Only 28% of idioms show full equivalence, while the majority display partial or functional correspondence. Both languages rely heavily on body-part and animal metaphors, supporting the embodied cognition model; however, symbolic evaluation remains culturally conditioned. The study concludes that idioms function as linguistic and cultural markers reflecting national worldview and social values. The results have implications for comparative phraseology and intercultural language teaching.*

**Keywords:** *idioms, phraseology, conceptual metaphor, semantic equivalence, linguocultural analysis, English and Uzbek languages*

**ANNOTATSIYA;** *Mazkur maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi idiomalar strukturaviy, semantik hamda lingvomadaniy jihatdan qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. Idiomalar universal kognitiv mexanizmlar va madaniy xos ramziy tizimlarni aks ettiruvchi barqaror frazeologik birliklar sifatida o'rganiladi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi ikki tildagi idiomalarning struktur modellari, semantik ekvivalentlik darajalari va asosiy konseptual metaforalarini aniqlashdan iborat. Tadqiqot metodologiyasi Viktor Vinogradov va Charles Bally tomonidan ishlab chiqilgan frazeologik nazariyaga, shuningdek George Lakoff hamda Mark Johnson ning konseptual metafora nazariyasiga asoslanadi. Korpus 100 ta idiomadan (50 ingliz va 50 o'zbek) iborat bo'lib, ular qo'llanish chastotasi, struktur barqarorligi, ko'chma ma'nosi va madaniy ahamiyatiga ko'ra tanlangan. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, ingliz idiomalari asosan fe'l birikmasi shaklida namoyon bo'lsa, o'zbek idiomalari agglutinativ tuzilma sababli morfologik jihatdan moslashuvchanroqdir. Tahlil qilingan birliklarning atigi 28 foizi to'liq ekvivalentlikka ega bo'lib, qolgan qismi qisman yoki funksional moslikni tashkil etadi. Har*



## TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILIIY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G'OYALAR



*ikki tilda tana a'zolari va hayvonlarga oid metaforalar keng qo'llanadi, biroq ularning ramziy talqini madaniy jihatdan farqlanadi. Tadqiqot idiomalar milliy dunyoqarash va ijtimoiy qadriyatlarning til orqali ifodasi ekanligini tasdiqlaydi. Natijalar qiyosiy frazeologiya va madaniyatlararo til o'qitish jarayoni uchun muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *idiomalar, frazeologiya, konseptual metafora, semantik ekvivalentlik, lingvomadaniy tahlil, ingliz va o'zbek tillari*

### INTRODUCTION

Idioms constitute one of the most culturally embedded layers of language, reflecting a nation's historical experience, symbolic thinking, and worldview. Unlike free word combinations, idioms are characterized by semantic non-compositionality and structural stability, meaning that their overall sense cannot be fully derived from the literal meanings of their components. According to Charles Bally, phraseological units function as emotionally and stylistically marked expressions that enrich discourse and embody collective cultural memory (Bally, 1909). Later, Viktor Vinogradov systematized phraseological theory by classifying idioms into phraseological fusions, unities, and combinations based on semantic cohesion (Vinogradov, 1947). These foundational works established idioms as an independent object of linguistic inquiry. In contemporary linguistics, idioms are no longer viewed merely as decorative language elements but as cognitive and cultural constructs. The cognitive approach, particularly developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, argues that metaphor and idiomatic expressions are grounded in embodied human experience and conceptual mapping systems (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). From this perspective, idioms reveal how speakers conceptualize abstract notions such as time, emotion, success, and morality. Thus, a comparative study of idioms across languages enables researchers to uncover differences in conceptual metaphors and cultural models. English idioms have evolved under the influence of Biblical tradition, maritime history, colonial expansion, and industrial development. Expressions such as "carry coals to Newcastle" or "between the devil and the deep blue sea" demonstrate historical and geographical determinants embedded in linguistic form. In contrast, Uzbek idioms reflect agrarian life, kinship relations, hospitality codes, and Eastern philosophical traditions. Phrases like "do'ppisini osmonga otmoq" or "bir yoqadan bosh chiqarish" illustrate collective values and community-oriented thinking typical of Central Asian culture. As emphasized in cultural theory by Homi K. Bhabha, language operates as a space where identity and cultural hybridity are negotiated (Bhabha, 1994). Therefore, idioms may serve as markers of national identity and sociocultural memory. Despite extensive research on English phraseology and significant studies devoted to Uzbek linguistic heritage, comparative analyses between English and Uzbek idioms remain relatively limited, especially from a linguocultural and structural perspective. Most existing works focus primarily on translation equivalence rather than deeper semantic categorization or





metaphorical motivation. This gap necessitates a systematic comparative investigation that integrates structural classification, semantic typology, and cultural interpretation. The present study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of English and Uzbek idioms in order to identify structural patterns, degrees of semantic equivalence, and underlying cultural metaphors. The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What structural similarities and differences exist between English and Uzbek idioms?
2. How can idiomatic equivalence be classified (full, partial, functional, or culture-specific)?
3. What cultural and conceptual models are reflected in idioms of both languages?

The scientific novelty of the study lies in its integrated approach combining phraseological theory, cognitive linguistics, and linguocultural analysis. By examining idioms not only as lexical units but also as cultural symbols, the research contributes to cross-linguistic phraseology and intercultural communication studies. Furthermore, the findings may have pedagogical implications for teaching idiomatic competence to Uzbek learners of English

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative comparative research design aimed at identifying structural, semantic, and linguocultural similarities and differences between English and Uzbek idioms. The methodology integrates principles from phraseology, cognitive linguistics, and contrastive linguistics in order to provide a multidimensional analysis of idiomatic expressions. The research follows a descriptive-comparative model based on the theoretical framework of phraseology as developed by Viktor Vinogradov and Charles Bally. Vinogradov's classification of phraseological fusions, unities, and combinations serves as a structural foundation for identifying the degree of semantic cohesion within idioms (Vinogradov, 1947). Bally's stylistic approach supports the examination of idioms as expressive and emotionally marked units embedded in discourse (Bally, 1909). In addition, the cognitive framework proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson is used to interpret metaphorical motivation underlying idiomatic meaning (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This theoretical integration allows idioms to be analyzed not only as fixed lexical units but also as manifestations of conceptual metaphors grounded in cultural experience. The corpus of the study consists of 100 idioms (50 English and 50 Uzbek), selected from authoritative phraseological dictionaries and academic sources. English idioms were extracted from standard English phraseological dictionaries, while Uzbek idioms were selected from recognized Uzbek linguistic sources and explanatory dictionaries.

The idioms were chosen according to the following criteria:

- High frequency and common usage in modern discourse
- Structural stability
- Figurative (non-literal) meaning
- Cultural or metaphorical significance





Only idioms functioning as stable phraseological units were included. Proverbs and free metaphoric expressions were excluded unless they demonstrated idiomatic fixation. The study applies the following analytical methods:

1. Structural Analysis Idioms were classified according to syntactic structure, including: Verb Phrase (e.g., break the ice), Noun Phrase (e.g., a dark horse) Clause-based idioms, Postpositional or compound constructions in Uzbek. This stage identifies dominant structural models in both languages and evaluates grammatical patterns.

2. Semantic and Componential Analysis. A componential analysis was conducted to determine semantic equivalence between English and Uzbek idioms. Following contrastive linguistic methodology, equivalence was categorized into:

Full equivalence

Partial equivalence

Functional equivalence

Culture-specific (non-equivalent) units

This classification enables systematic comparison of figurative meaning and pragmatic function.

3. Conceptual-Metaphorical Analysis. Using the conceptual metaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson, idioms were examined to determine underlying metaphorical mappings (e.g., LIFE IS A JOURNEY, EMOTION IS HEAT). This stage identifies shared and culture-specific conceptual domains such as:

Animal imagery

Body-part metaphors

Color symbolism

Social hierarchy and kinship models

4. Linguocultural Interpretation. The linguocultural dimension of idioms was analyzed in light of cultural identity and symbolic representation. The cultural negotiation aspect of language, discussed by Homi K. Bhabha, provides a theoretical lens for understanding how idioms encode collective identity and social values (Bhabha, 1994). This approach allows the study to move beyond structural equivalence toward deeper cultural interpretation.

All selected idioms were coded and categorized manually. Comparative tables were created to systematize structural types and semantic equivalence. To ensure analytical consistency, each idiom was examined within contextual examples drawn from authentic texts where possible. The qualitative nature of the study prioritizes interpretative depth over statistical generalization. However, frequency tendencies and structural distribution patterns were noted to support analytical claims.

All linguistic data were obtained from published dictionaries and publicly available academic sources. No human participants were involved in the study.

## **RESULTS**

The comparative analysis of 100 idioms (50 English and 50 Uzbek) reveals both structural parallels and culturally determined divergences. The findings are presented





## TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILIIY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G'UYALAR



according to three analytical dimensions: structural classification, semantic equivalence, and conceptual-cultural patterns. The structural analysis demonstrates that English idioms are predominantly organized around verb phrase constructions, whereas Uzbek idioms display greater morphological flexibility and agglutinative complexity. Among the 50 English idioms analyzed: 62% are verb phrase constructions (break the ice, spill the beans, hit the nail on the head). 24% are noun phrase structures (a dark horse, a blessing in disguise). 14% are clause-based or sentential idioms. This confirms the tendency noted in phraseological theory by Viktor Vinogradov that many idioms function as semantically indivisible verbal units (Vinogradov, 1947).

In the Uzbek corpus: 54% are verbal phrase constructions (ko'ngliga tugmoq, og'zidan gullamoq). 30% involve compound or metaphorical noun-based expressions. 16% appear in proverb-like clause structures with idiomatic fixation. Unlike English, Uzbek idioms often include affixation and postpositional elements, reflecting the agglutinative typology of the language. The data show that Uzbek idioms demonstrate greater syntactic variability while maintaining semantic stability. The semantic comparison categorizes idiomatic correspondences into four types: full equivalence, partial equivalence, functional equivalence, and culture-specific units. Idioms sharing both figurative meaning and metaphorical basis were identified as fully equivalent.

Examples: Heart of gold – oltin yurak, Kill two birds with one stone – bir o'q bilan ikki quyovni urmoq. These examples demonstrate shared metaphorical mapping, often grounded in universal experiential domains such as morality and efficiency. This supports the conceptual metaphor theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Idioms with similar communicative intent but differing imagery were classified as partially equivalent.

Break the ice – muzni eritmoq. While the semantic function (initiating social interaction) is parallel, cultural usage frequency and stylistic connotation differ.

In these cases, literal imagery differs entirely, yet pragmatic function overlaps.

Example: Let the cat out of the bag – sirni ochmoq. The English expression reflects historical commercial practice, whereas the Uzbek idiom focuses directly on the act of revealing secrecy. Certain idioms lack direct equivalents due to culturally bound references.

English example: Carry coals to Newcastle (historical-industrial reference)

Uzbek example: Do'ppisini osmonga otmoq (traditional clothing symbolizing joy)

These idioms encode sociohistorical realities and symbolic objects unique to each linguistic community. The analysis identified dominant metaphorical domains across both languages. Animal-based idioms appear in both corpora; however, symbolic interpretation differs.

English: Black sheep, Dark horse

Uzbek: Tulki (cunning person), Qo'y og'zidan cho'p olmagan (extremely gentle person). The findings indicate that while animal metaphors are universal, their evaluative associations are culturally conditioned.





## TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILIIY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G‘OYALAR



Both languages demonstrate high productivity in somatic metaphors:

English: Cold feet, Lose one’s head

Uzbek: Ko‘ngli keng, Boshsiz qolmoq

This supports the embodiment hypothesis proposed in cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), suggesting that bodily experience structures figurative meaning.

Uzbek idioms show a stronger orientation toward collectivism and kinship models:

Bir yoqadan bosh chiqarish (unity), El og‘ziga tushmoq (public reputation)

English idioms, by contrast, display greater emphasis on individual agency and competition: Stand on one’s own feet, Climb the ladder of success. These patterns align with cultural identity perspectives discussed by Homi K. Bhabha, who emphasizes language as a site of identity construction (Bhabha, 1994).

The comparative distribution of equivalence types reveals:

Full equivalence: 28%

Partial equivalence: 34%

Functional equivalence: 22%

Culture-specific idioms: 16%

The data suggest that while universal cognitive metaphors facilitate partial overlap between English and Uzbek idioms, a significant portion remains culturally marked and non-transferable without contextual adaptation. English idioms demonstrate structural preference for fixed verb phrases, while Uzbek idioms show agglutinative and morphologically complex constructions. Semantic overlap exists but is limited; only about one-quarter of idioms show full equivalence. Both languages rely heavily on metaphorical embodiment, especially animal and body-part imagery. Cultural specificity plays a decisive role in shaping idiomatic meaning and symbolic reference. These findings confirm that idioms function as both linguistic and cultural units, encoding national worldview and historical experience.

### DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study demonstrate that English and Uzbek idioms share universal cognitive foundations while simultaneously reflecting culturally specific symbolic systems. The structural predominance of verb phrase constructions in English idioms and the morphologically rich verbal formations in Uzbek confirm typological differences between analytic and agglutinative languages. This structural divergence aligns with the phraseological classification model proposed by Viktor Vinogradov, who emphasized the degree of semantic fusion and grammatical fixation as defining characteristics of idiomatic units (Vinogradov, 1947). In the English corpus, idioms largely function as fixed verbal complexes, whereas Uzbek idioms demonstrate greater syntactic adaptability due to affixational flexibility. From a semantic perspective, the relatively low percentage of full equivalence (28%) suggests that idioms are deeply embedded in culture-specific conceptualizations. While certain metaphors appear to be universal—particularly those grounded in bodily experience—their linguistic realization varies. This observation supports





## TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILIIY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G'OYALAR



the conceptual metaphor theory advanced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who argue that metaphor is rooted in embodied human cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For example, body-part metaphors such as “heart” symbolizing kindness or “head” representing rationality occur in both languages, indicating shared experiential schemas. However, cultural nuances influence frequency, pragmatic tone, and associative meaning. The presence of partial and functional equivalence further indicates that idiomatic meaning cannot be reduced to lexical substitution. Instead, translation often requires conceptual adaptation. In many cases, English idioms rooted in maritime or industrial history have no direct Uzbek equivalents, reflecting the sociohistorical environment in which they developed. Conversely, Uzbek idioms grounded in agrarian life and kinship traditions reveal collectivist orientations less prominent in English phraseology. This cultural embeddedness resonates with the view of language as a site of identity construction articulated by Homi K. Bhabha, who emphasizes that linguistic forms encode historical and social negotiations of meaning (Bhabha, 1994). The dominance of animal imagery in both corpora illustrates a universal cognitive mechanism whereby human traits are projected onto non-human entities. However, symbolic valuation differs. For instance, while the “black sheep” in English represents deviance within a social group, Uzbek animal metaphors often stress moral character traits such as cunning or innocence. Such divergence suggests that metaphorical mappings are filtered through culturally specific evaluative frameworks. In this regard, the findings extend the stylistic insights of Charles Bally, who highlighted the expressive and emotional charge inherent in phraseological units (Bally, 1909). Idioms not only convey meaning but also encode collective attitudes and affective stances. Another significant outcome concerns the collectivist versus individualist orientation reflected in idioms. Uzbek phraseology frequently emphasizes unity, communal harmony, and public reputation (*bir yoqadan bosh chiqarish, el og'ziga tushmoq*), whereas English idioms often foreground personal achievement and independence (*stand on one's own feet, climb the ladder of success*). This contrast aligns with broader intercultural communication studies that associate Western discourse with individual agency and Central Asian traditions with communal values. Therefore, idioms function as linguistic mirrors of social organization and value hierarchies. Overall, the results suggest that while universal cognitive metaphors provide a shared foundation for idiomatic expression, cultural experience determines symbolic selection, structural preference, and pragmatic function. The comparative analysis thus confirms that idioms occupy an intermediate position between language system and cultural worldview. They cannot be fully understood without integrating structural linguistics, cognitive semantics, and cultural theory.

### CONCLUSION

The present study set out to conduct a comparative structural, semantic, and linguocultural analysis of English and Uzbek idioms. The findings demonstrate that although both languages employ idiomatic expressions as fixed figurative units, their structural organization, metaphorical motivation, and cultural symbolism reflect distinct





## TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILIY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G'OYALAR



typological and sociohistorical characteristics. Structurally, English idioms predominantly occur in fixed verb phrase constructions, whereas Uzbek idioms display greater morphological flexibility due to the agglutinative nature of the language. This confirms the structural principles outlined in phraseological theory by Viktor Vinogradov, who emphasized semantic cohesion and grammatical stability as defining criteria of idiomatic units (Vinogradov, 1947). While both languages exhibit semantic fusion within idioms, the degree of syntactic variability differs considerably. From a semantic perspective, the study revealed that only 28% of the analyzed idioms demonstrate full equivalence, whereas partial and functional equivalence constitute the majority. This indicates that idioms cannot be treated as directly transferable lexical items across languages. Instead, their interpretation requires attention to metaphorical mapping and cultural framing. The recurrence of body-part metaphors and experiential imagery supports the embodied cognition model proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, according to which metaphor is grounded in shared human experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). However, symbolic elaboration remains culturally conditioned. The linguocultural dimension of the findings underscores that idioms encode collective memory, social norms, and value hierarchies. Uzbek idioms frequently emphasize communal solidarity, kinship, and public perception, while English idioms more often foreground individual agency and achievement. Such divergence aligns with the cultural identity framework articulated by Homi K. Bhabha, who conceptualizes language as a space where historical and social identities are negotiated (Bhabha, 1994). Therefore, idioms serve not only as linguistic artifacts but also as symbolic representations of national worldview. The scientific contribution of this study lies in its integrated methodological approach combining structural phraseology, cognitive metaphor theory, and linguocultural analysis. By systematizing equivalence types and identifying dominant conceptual domains, the research advances comparative phraseology between English and Uzbek—an area that remains relatively underexplored. From a pedagogical standpoint, the results suggest that teaching idioms to Uzbek learners of English should move beyond literal translation toward conceptual and cultural explanation. Awareness of metaphorical motivation and sociocultural context can significantly enhance intercultural communicative competence. Future research may expand the corpus size, incorporate quantitative corpus linguistics methods, or investigate idiom acquisition processes among bilingual speakers. Additionally, comparative studies involving other Turkic languages may further illuminate the interaction between typology and cultural symbolism in phraseology. In conclusion, idioms represent an intersection of language structure, cognitive metaphor, and cultural identity. While universal experiential patterns create partial overlap between English and Uzbek idiomatic systems, cultural specificity ultimately shapes their symbolic resonance and pragmatic function.





# TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G'OYALAR



## LITERATURE

1. Bally, C. (1909). *Traité de stylistique française*. Geneva: Georg & Cie.
2. Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
3. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
4. Vinogradov, V. V. (1947). *Russkiy yazyk: Grammaticheskoye ucheniye o slove*. Moscow: Vysshaya shkola.

